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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MO](#) [WI](#) [SU](#) [SP](#) [USUN](#)

SUBJECT: SPAIN: NEW "APPROACH" ON WESTERN SAHARA; VIEWS ON
ICJ RULING; SUPPORT FOR US EFFORT IN SUDAN

REF: A. STATE 150763

[1](#)B. STATE 152014

Classified By: Kathleen M. Fitzpatrick, Political Counselor.
Reasons: 1.4 B/D

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) The GOS is pursuing a new "approach" to resolve the crisis in the Western Sahara but its elements remain unclear, according to the newly appointed MFA Director General for the Mediterranean, Near East, and Africa, Alvaro Iranzo. The Spanish Deputy Foreign Minister is in the process of discussing the new approach with parties in the region, and with France, and would like to share his view with senior NEA officials. Iranzo was non-committal on the UNGA resolution on the ICJ. Subsequent discussions with the MFA indicate that FM Moratinos, who has been in Brussels, has not yet decided on the issue. On Sudan, the GOS is likely to support a strong UNSC resolution and an EU statement on the Darfur crisis. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) PolCouns met July 12 with newly appointed Director General of Foreign Policy for the Mediterranean, Near East, and Africa Alvaro Iranzo Gutierrez to exchange views on the Western Sahara, the ICJ ruling, and Spain's Africa policy. Iranzo has considerable experience in Africa and the Middle East. He served in Gabon (1981), Mozambique (1983), and Algeria (1989). In 1992, he was a deputy director of Bureau of North African affairs under current Foreign Minister Miguel Moratinos, who was director general of the bureau then. Iranzo was an assistant to Moratinos when Moratinos was the EU's Special Representative to the Middle East Process in 1996. Later, Iranzo was Spain's ambassador to Angola (1997) and Malaysia (2001) before assuming his current position.

Spain's Middle East Posture

[1](#)3. (C) Iranzo told us that Spain will taken an active approach on the Middle East given FM Moratinos experience in the region as an EU envoy. Spain maintains close relations to the Arab world, especially Morocco, and has good relations with Israel. On Morocco, Iranzo noted that despite press reports, the GOS is not threatened by Morocco's Major non-NATO Ally Status and the free trade agreement with the U.S. Both Spain and the U.S. are interested in regional stability, and "what's good for Morocco is good for Spain," Iranzo remarked. He affirmed that despite previously tumultuous relations with Algeria, Spain now has good relations with Algeria (Note: President Zapatero will make a one-day State visit to Algeria July [1](#)4. End Note.) Overall, the Arab world sees Spain, and especially Foreign Minister Moratinos, as a credible interlocutor in the Middle East Process and the Western Sahara, Iranzo said.

Western Sahara

[1](#)4. (C) Noting recent press statement by Moratinos, PolCouns asked whether the new Spanish government had adopted a new policy on the Western Sahara. Iranzo responded by expressing support for the broad outline of the Baker Plan but said Spain is seeking a new "approach" to overcome the impasse over the issue of the Polisario referendum. When PolCouns pressed for specific details, Iranzo admitted that there were no specific plans. He said Spain's initiative would deal with "methodology" rather than final outcomes. Iranzo also said that the new UN envoy for the Western Sahara, De Soto, did not have the stature to move the process forward. However, according to Iranzo, Spain wants to be more involved in pressing for a solution in the Western Sahara acceptable to all parties. Spain wants to convince the Polisario to be more flexible, to persuade France and the U.S. to be more consensual, and to avoid a UN-imposed solution.

15. (C) Iranzo acknowledged that Spain's new approach carries international and domestic risks. President Zapatero, Minister Moratinos, and State Secretary for Foreign Policy Bernardino Leon have been consulting with France, Morocco, Algeria, and the Polisario on the Western Sahara issue. Iranzo said that the GOS is concerned that failure in the Western Sahara would jeopardize the MINURSO mandate, radicalize Moroccans, and possibly increase illegal immigration and terrorism in Spain. He said that State Secretary Leon wants to meet with senior NEA officials to discuss Spain's approach in the Western Sahara in the near future.

Spain and the ICJ Court Ruling

16. (C) PolCouns reviewed ref (a) points on the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) ruling on the Israeli security barrier with Iranzo (meeting took place before the draft resolution had been put forth, and before the receipt of ref (b) demarche). Iranzo said that although Israel had the right to defend itself against terrorism, it also has to consider how its policies affect Palestinians and must listen to the international community. The security barrier is being constructed in Palestinian territory, and the recent Israeli Supreme Court ruling may only change on a small portion of the barrier, Iranzo argued. Nevertheless, Palestinian leadership must be held responsible for actions that are contrary to the Road Map. The ICJ ruling shows, however, that Israel has few friends in the world, Iranzo said.

17. (C) Iranzo did not commit to a position on the new UNGA resolution on the ICJ decision. (FYI: Spain under the Aznar government abstained on the December 2003 UNGA resolution remanding the case to the ICJ.) Iranzo indicated, however, that Spain would not want to be seen objecting to a near-unanimous decision by the ICJ. Iranzo said Spain respects the ICJ decision and wants to be constructive and seek common ground on the issue at the UN. The MFA is discussing the issue with the Israel's ambassador in Spain and with Israeli officials in Tel Aviv. Iranzo promised to communicate our message directly to Minister Moratinos. Subsequent discussions with the MFA indicate Moratinos, who has been traveling, has not yet decided on the issue (septel).

Spain and Sudan

18. (C) PolCouns thanked Iranzo for Spain's support for USG efforts in Sudan, and delivered the importance of Secretary Powell's visit there. Iranzo told us that Spain wants to help define the terms of the Darfur resolution in the UN in the interest of securing peace in Sudan. He was concerned that applying sanctions on the Jinjaweit militias would be difficult because the leaders are not easily identifiable. However, Spain would support a UNSC resolution on Darfur that puts pressure on the Government of Sudan to disarm the militias and allow humanitarian aid workers access to refugees. Iranzo said that Spain has also been involved in helping draft a strong EU statement on Sudan.

19. (C) Noting the USG's broad, multilateral approach to the resolution of conflicts in Africa and dealing with global challenges such as combating HIV/AIDS, PolCouns shared a copy of Secretary Powell's July 8, 2004 speech outlining the USG's approach on key Africa issues. Iranzo said that he had not seen the speech and was grateful to receive it.

10. (C) Iranzo said that Spain also supports a multi-lateral approach to African issues given the small size of its missions on the continent. Having served as ambassador to Angola, Iranzo told us that Spain has maintained comprehensive relations with southern Africa and Spanish and Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa. He said that Spain's major issue in Africa is illegal immigration. Bilateral agreements to control illegal immigration between African countries and Spain have had little success, Iranzo said. Nevertheless, the GOS will continue to engage African countries on issues such as immigration, democracy building, and human rights. Iranzo stated that on these issues the U.S. and Spain share a strong common interest.

MANZANARES